

## Notes: *Walk as Children of Light* (Eph. 5:8-14)

**Intro:** Here again we see the Pauline pattern for Christian growth that we have seen throughout this letter. Since we are *now* new men and women in Christ, we must no longer live as though we were still old. We must live as a new creation. This assurance helps us take the strong exhortations of this section to heart! The strong imperatives of Scripture (ex. 5:3) challenge our cultural sensibilities. We may wonder “Is this naïve, realistic, possible?” But Paul dispels the darkness of that old way of thinking. He says “Yes! Remember who you are in Christ by God’s grace and power. No longer darkness but light. Therefore walk as children of light. How?”

**#1: By expressing the light (8-10).** One of the ways God’s children express the light and life in them is they “try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.” The word translated “discern” translates a favor Greek verb in Paul’s vocabulary. The background to this term is found in the idea of examining and verifying something. In the ancient world the term was used for examining metals in order to detect impurities and prove genuineness. Paul means the child of light wants to grow in his knowledge and understanding of God’s Word so that he may judge and “discern” what is “pleasing to the Lord.” “Pleasing to the Lord” is a phrase that should captivate us! In his various NT letters, Paul accepts as a given that the children of light will want to express their new life by a desire to please their heavenly Father who gave his Son that he might live (ex. Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 4:1; 1 Tim. 2:3). Is this your desire? At least three reasons say it should be: God is pleased with obedience because he is glorious. If God did not delight in obedience he would be a living contradiction. He would love his glory above all things and yet he would not take pleasure in the acts of his children which express that glory. We are children of light. Those who “behold the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (2 Cor. 3:18). The Spirit of God and life of Christ dwells in the child of God so that he should be a bearer of God’s light. God is pleased with obedience because his will is good. Jesus is the Great Physician. John Piper says: “Jesus said: It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Jesus dictates but his commands are like the doctor’s orders. They are meant to make us well and happy. If they come with painful side effects, it’s not because our Physician is unkind. It is because our disease is so serious that radical surgery is necessary. Every command from our Lord is for our good. David said: “Serve the Lord with gladness.” God is pleased with obedience because it reveals true faith. The church widely misunderstands the relationship between faith and obedience. Faith is connected to obedience as a root and branch. Saving faith is no mere intellectual assent to the truths of the gospel that leaves the heart unchanged. Paul said: “faith works through love” (Gal 5:6). How does faith necessarily bear the fruit of obedience? Looking back over this letter, we see faith accepts that God chose the believer to be holy and blameless before the foundation of the world (1:4). Faith accepts that Christ redeemed us from sin’s guilt by his blood for this very purpose (1:7). Through faith in Jesus our sins are forgiven and we are reconciled to God. Feed your faith with this assurance and you will want to live for Him who loved and gave himself for you.! Faith accepts that the Spirit of God is working in you to make you holy according to the Father’s purpose and Christ’s redemption. Having believed in Christ we were “sealed” by the Spirit (made secure in Christ). The Spirit is working in us to “will and do his good pleasure” (Phil 2:13). Let us consecrate

ourselves to pleasing the Lord with this assurance. Such knowledge transforms obedience. It makes duty a delight.

**#2: By exposing the darkness (11-14).** The Christian's life is not merely a matter of darkness-avoidance but also of darkness-exposure. Indeed one cannot be light without at the same time exposing the darkness! Listen to Paul: "take no part in the...expose them...it is shameful even to speak of these things..." Do we feel these blunt statements cutting across the grain of our cultural sensibilities? Do they seem naïve? Antiquated? Impractical? They are up to date and wise. Chapell: "When we are so familiar with the profane that it no longer offends and we have forgotten to blush because of it, then we are in grave spiritual danger." Exposing the darkness requires as much God given discernment as expressing the light. Principles: Consider your context. "take no part"(11) "do not become partners with them" (7). We are *not* to take ourselves out of the world or avoid all contact with the immoral. But in your desire to redeem culture are you exposing the darkness or enjoying it? Consider your motives. Do your words and deeds lead you to enjoy or expose the darkness? Are you trying to find out what pleases the Lord? Consider the danger. Darkness leads to destruction. The mind is the watchman of the soul but if the mind is deceived into believing sin is good and desirable how great is the fall!